

flicking (much more often than the Purple-rumped sunbirds), uttering a squeaky *tseek* at intervals. They also chased each other feebly when not being attacked by their rivals. The Table 1 summarises differences in feeding behaviour.

There was a *Plumeria rubra* in flower next to the *Hamelia patens*, ignored by the purple-rumped sunbirds. Loten's sunbirds spent a little time perching and probing these flowers, and making holes at the base of the corolla to get at the nectar. They have, therefore, differ-

ent methods to deal with different flowers. At *Hamelia* however, the differences in feeding behaviour between the species are so marked that it is possible to identify *N. lotenia* by their persistent hovering and moving in flight from one dangling bunch to another, before confirming the identification with binoculars. A male in full breeding plumage, a young male assuming adult plumage, with a broad central black stripe from throat to abdomen, and three or four females/immatures have all shown the same type of behaviour.

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17. CO-OPERATIVE FEEDING OF CHICKS OF THE PURPLE-RUMPED SUNBIRD (*NECTARINIA ZEYLONICA*)

Although two eggs in a nest is the normal clutch of the Purplerumped Sunbird (*Nectarinia zeylonica*), feeding of the chicks in the same nest by two different females does not seem to have been recorded.

Two nests were constructed by different pairs of the Purplerumped Sunbird last summer on Bougainvillaea twigs in the portico of my cottage at Santiniketan, Bolpur, Dist. Birbhum, West Bengal. One of the nests was destroyed in a gale soon after. In early September 1984, it was discovered that two separate females, one lighter coloured than the other, were feed-

ing the two chicks in the surviving nest. This continued for 17 days, when the fledglings flew off the nest. The females fed the chicks almost simultaneously, and one of them sat with the young at night. The single male merely helped bringing the food along with the females, but never approached too close to the nest.

The nest was made up of fibrous material and bright parts of the fruits of some local Asclepiadaceae. It measured about 16 cm long and 6.5 cm broad, with the opening and the porch located in the upper half.

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